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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 SIG-03 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 CU-04
/103 W
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R 222034Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3968
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 1557

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MPOL, ECON, XL, CU, BH, DR
SUBJECT: CUBAN OUTREACH IN THE CARIBBEAN

REF STATE 56727, HAVANA 274, SANTO DOMINGO 823

1. CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC CENTER AROUND REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS, OCCASIONAL HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL VISITS AND CULTURAL AND ATHLETIC EXCHANGES. ALTHOUGH SUCH CONTACTS ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, TECHNICAL OR RELATIVELY LOW-LEVEL, THEY ARE INCREASEING IN NUMBER. THE CUBAN IMAGE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SEEMS TO BE BENEFITING FROM THIS EXPOSURE AND FINDING A SOMEWHAT WIDER IF CAUTIOUS ACCEPTANCE AMONG DOMINICANS. ON THE OFFICIAL LEVEL, HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL DEEP MISTRUST OF CUBAN INTENTIONS AND A CLEAR INTENT TO KEEP RELATIONS LIMITED.

2. SIGNIFICANT COOPERATION TAKES PLACE ON THE TECHNICAL LEVEL THROUGH THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN SUGAR EXPORTERS GROUP (GEPLACEA), FORMED IN 1975 TO COORDINATE EXPORT POLICIES OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN SUGAR PRODUCERS. CUBA SERVES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND WORKING GROUP OF PRODUCTION AND MARKETING
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EXPERTS, ALONG WITH THE DR. PRIOR TO THE MARCH 1977, GEPLACEA MEETING IN HAVANA, A DELEGATION OF THE CUBAN SUGAR INSTITUTE (CUBAZUCAR) VISITED HERE AND DISCUSSED SUCH QUESTIONS AS A COMMON NEGOTIATING STANCE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT TALKS, GEPLACEAZ ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL MATTERS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH THEIR DOMINICAN COUNTERPARTS. AT THE HAVANA MEETING, FIDEL CASTRO RECEIVED THE GODR DELEGATION, ASKING THEM

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TO CONVEY HIS PERSONAL REGARDS TO PRESIDENT BALAGUER.

3. HIGH LEVEL CUBAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND WELL KNOWN FIGURES INCREASINGLY HAVE FOUND OCCASION TO VISIT THE DR. THE MOST PUBLICIZED CUBAN MISSION HEADED BY EDUCATION MINISTER AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER FERNANDO VECINO ALEGRET, ACCOMPANIED THE TRANSFER OF DOMINICAN POET FABIO FIALLO'S REMAINS FROM CUBA TO THE DR IN FEBRUARY. PRESIDENT BALAGUER RECEIVED VECINO'S GROUP AND THE CUBANS TOURED THE COUNTRY, ADDRESSING FRIENDLY DOMINICAN AUDIENCES ON CUBAN SOCIALISM AND VISITING THE ONE-TIME HOME OF JOSE MARTI. PRESS TREATMENT WAS CORDIAL, FUELING SPECULATION THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD SOONER RATHER THAN LATER REESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, A PROSPECT DENIED BY SECRETARY JIMENEZ IN FEB 15 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR HURWITCH. AS WITH GEPLACEA DELEGATION, DOMINICAN MISSION WHICH WENT TO HAVANA TO COLLECT FIALLO'S REMAINS WAS WARMLY RECEIVED BY CASTRO. SUBJECTOF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ALSO AROSE IN MARCH 1977 WHEN CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER ISIDORO MALMIERCA PEOLI ATTENDED A MEETING IN SANTO DOMINGO OF THE CARIBBEAN COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (CDCC), A SUB-GROUP OF THE UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION ON LATIN AMERICA. ALTHOUGH DOMINICAN FOREIGN OFFICE STATED THAT THE ISSUE OF FORMAL RELATIONS WAS NOT DISCUSSED, MALMIERCA EMPHASIZED THE CDCC AS AN EFFECTIVE VEHICLE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN MEMBER COUNTRIES. IN SEPT 77, CUBAN DIRECTOR OF TOURISM, GARY GONZALEZ BENITEZ, PARTICIPATED IN A MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN MINISTERS OF TOURISM IN SANTO DOMINGO.

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4. SEVERAL DOMINICANS HAVE RESENTLY TRAVELED TO CUBA. FOR EXAMPLE, DOMINICAN COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS, NARCISO ISA CONDE AND CARLOS DORE CABRAL, A GROUP OF THE DOMINICAN "FRIENDS OF CUBA" COMMITTEE, AND ARCHEOLOGIST MARCIO VELOZ MAGGLIO, HAVE RECENTLY BEEN IN HAVANA. PCD LEADERS MET WITH CASTRO. A GROUP OF DOMINICAN STUDENTS IS CURRENTLY ORGANIZING ITSELF TO ATTEND THE 11TH WORLD YOUTH AND STUDENT FESTIVAL IN HAVANA THIS JULY.

5. CUBAN INFLUENCE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC REMAINS AT A VERY LOW LEVEL. COOPERATION WITHIN GEPLACEA HAS BEEN LIMITED TO SUGAR MATTERS, AND THE FIALLO MISSION, THUS FAR, HAS BEEN THE HIGH POINT OF THE DOMINICAN-CUBAN RAPPROCHMENT. ALTHOUGH THE VISIT SUCCEEDED IN IMPROVING THE CUBAN IMAGE AND LOWER LEVEL CULTURAL AND SPORTS CONTACTS ARE INCREASING,MANY DOMINICANS HARBOR A FUNDAMENTAL DISTRUST OF CUBAN MOTIVES DUE TO THE DR'S PAST EXPERIENCE WITH INSURGENCY GROUPS. A BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE MILITARY AND INFLUENTIAL CUBAN EXPATRIATE COLONY HELPS PERPETUATE THIS FEELING. THE EMBASSY EXPECTS RELATIONS TO CONTINUE ON ROUGHLY THE SAME PLANE UNDER THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.
HURWITCH

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